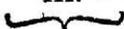


CHAP.

XI.



the town of Port au Prince has already been noticed. Unhealthy in itself, it is surrounded by fortified heights, which command both the lines and the harbour; and these heights are again commanded by others. Here, the enemy, on their retreat from the town, made their stand, in the well-founded confidence of receiving regular supplies of men, ammunition, and necessaries from Aux Cayes, a sea-port on the southern coast, distant only from Port au Prince by a very easy road, about forty miles (*a*). No part of St. Domingo possesses a more ready communication with the French Islands to windward, or with the states of America, than the port last mentioned; and from both those sources, reinforcements were constantly poured into the enemy's camp. On this account the British commanders found it indispensibly necessary to strengthen the lines, and raise additional intrenchments and works on that side of the town which fronts the mountains. Thus a most severe and unusual burthen was imposed on the soldiers. They were compelled, with but little intermission, to dig the ground in the day, and to perform military duty in the night; exposed, in the one case, to the burning rays of the sun; in the other, to the noxious dews and heavy rains of the climate. Such extraordinary and

(*a*) The harbour of Aux Cayes was guarded by two small forts, each of which was furnished with only six pieces of cannon, and a smaller battery, which mounted only five pieces. The number of white inhabitants belonging to the town were computed at eight hundred; but the people of colour had taken possession of it the latter end of 1792, and Andrew Rigaud, a Mulatto, was made commander in chief and governor-general of the south side of the French part of St. Domingo. His power was absolute, and his brother, of the same colour, was appointed next in command. These men were invested with this authority by the two commissioners, Polverel and Santhonax.